

Organizations, Paradigms, and People: The Challenge of KM Interventions

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The Multiple Paradigm Tool

Teresa Bailey - presenter

- Why think about paradigms --Burrell and Morgan's approach
- When to consider the tool
- Assumptions about the Nature of Social Science
- Assumptions about the Nature of Society
- Four Paradigms: Tool for Analyzing Organizations
- Schools of Sociological and Organizational Theory
- Meaning and Metaphors in the Four Paradigms
- Possibilities and Conclusions

Four Paradigms: tool for the Analyzing Organizations

The Sociology of Radical Change

'Radical
humanist'

'Radical
structuralist'

Subjective

Objective

'Interpretive'

'Functionalist'

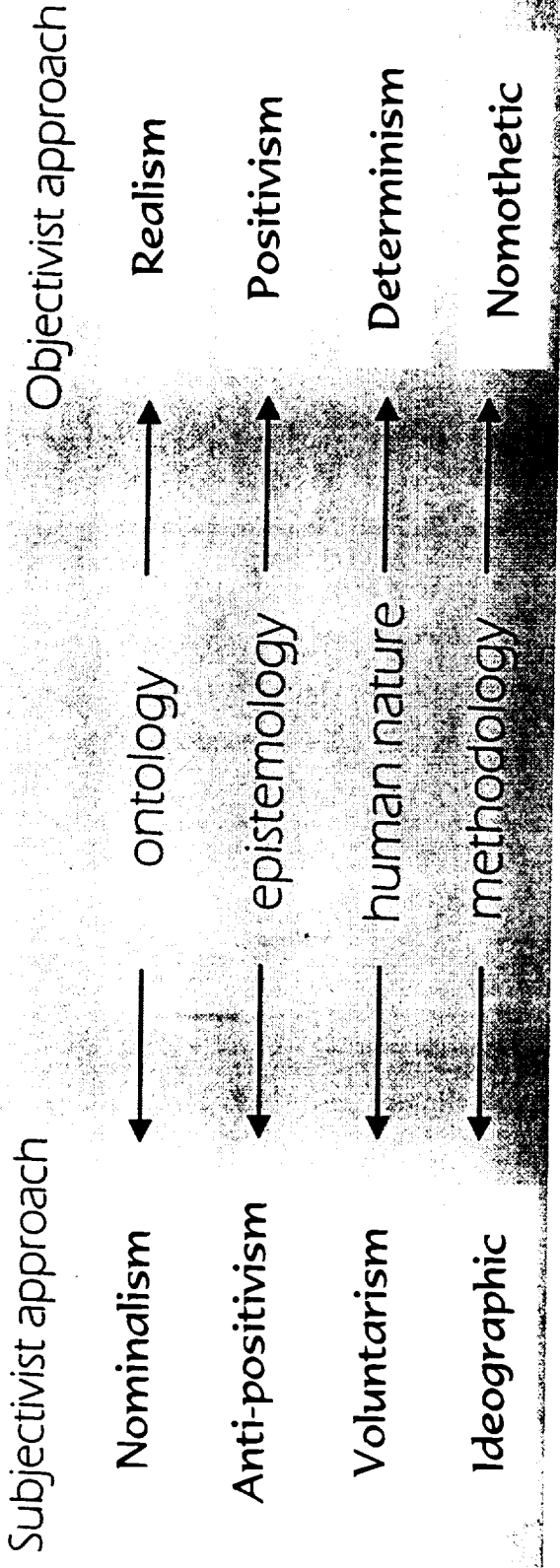
The Sociology of Regulation

From: *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis: Elements of the Sociology of Corporate Life*, by Gibson Burrell and Gareth Morgan, Heinemann Educational Books, Inc., New Hampshire, 1979.

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Assumptions about the Nature of Social Science

THE SUBJECTIVE-OBJECTIVE DIMENSION



Nominalism/realism the ontological debate

Nominalist – There is no 'real' structure of the world, assumption that the social world external to individual cognition is made up of nothing more than names, concepts and labels which are used to structure reality.

Realist – The world exists independently of an individual's appreciation to it – the social world external to individual cognition is a real world made up of hard, tangible and immutable structures whether or not we perceive them, they still exist as empirical entities.

Anti-positivism/positivism the epistemological debate

Positivist – Seeks to explain and predict what happens in the social world by searching for regularities and causal relationships between its constituent elements. In essence based upon the traditional approaches that dominate the natural sciences.

Anti-positivism – The social world is essentially relativistic and can only be understood from the point of view of the individuals who are directly involved in the activities which are studied.

Voluntarism/determinism the human nature debate

Determinist – View which regards human nature and activities as being completely determined by the situation or environment in which they are located.

Voluntarist – Human nature is completely autonomous and free willed.

Ideographic/nomothetic theory the methodological debate

Ideographic – Approach to social science is based on the view that one can only understand the social world by obtaining first-hand knowledge of the subject under investigation. Stresses the importance of letting one's subject unfold its nature and characteristics during the process of investigation.

Nomothetic – Approach to social science emphasizes the importance of basing research upon systematic protocol and technique. Approach and methods employed in the natural sciences which focuses on the process of testing hypotheses in accordance with the canons of scientific rigor.

Assumptions about the Nature of Society

ORDER AND CONFLICT THEORIES OF SOCIETY

The 'order' or 'integrationist' view of society emphasizes:

Stability
Integration
Functional co-ordination
Consensus

The 'conflict' or 'coercion' view of society emphasizes:

Change
Conflict
Disintegration
Coercion

REGULATION – RADICAL CHANGE DIMENSION

The sociology of 'regulation' is concerned with:

The status quo
Social order
Consensus
Social integration and cohesion
Solidarity
Need satisfaction
Actuality

The sociology of 'radical change' is concerned with:

Radical change
Structural conflict
Modes of domination
Contradiction
Emancipation
Deprivation
Potentiality

Schools of Sociological and Organizational Theory

The Sociology of Radical Change (Conflict)

- Emphasis on Radical Change – importance of overthrowing or transcending limitations of existing social arrangements.
- Change the world through a change in modes of cognition and consciousness.
- Anti-organization theory.
- French Existentialism, Anarchistic Individualism, Critical Theory.

- Committed to radical change, emancipation, and potentiality.
- Emphasizes structural conflict, modes of domination, contradiction, and deprivation.
- Older Marx as influenced by Darwinian theories of evolution and political economy.
- Radical organization theory.

Radical humanist

Radical structuralist

Subjective

Objective

Interpretive

- Social world is an emergent social process created by concerned individuals – shared meaning.
- Concerned with issues of status quo, social order, consensus, social integration and cohesion, solidarity and actuality.
- Ethnomethodology and Phenomenological symbolic interactionism.

Functionalist

- Rooted in sociological positivism
- Framework explains status quo, social order, consensus, social integration, solidarity, need satisfaction, and actuality.
- Concerned with the regulated order of objective facts.
- Interactionism and Social Action Theory

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Meaning and Metaphors in the Four Paradigms

The Sociology of Radical Change (Conflict)

- Overthrowing or transcending the limitations of existing order
- Rebellious, release from constraints of societies values
- Critiques the status quo
- Realize ones full potential
- Anti-organization

- Realist, positivist, determinist, nomothetic
- Approach to science similar to the functionalist but have different values
- Committed to change, emancipation and potentiality
- Emphasises structural conflict
- Focus on structural relationships vs. consciousness
- Explanations of interrelationships, power

Radical humanist

Radical structuralist

Subjective

Objective

Interpretive

- Implicit, assuming is okay
- Spiritual nature of social world through experience
- Individuality, uniqueness
- Focus on the participant not the observer
- Multi-dimensional person
- Everyday life is miraculous
- Depths of consciousness
- World of human affairs is cohesive, integrated

Functionalist

- Regulative, classes, hierarchies, patriarchs
- Dominant, control
- Social order, equilibrium, authority figures
- Everyday life is predictable
- Right and wrong, good and evil
- Empirical, provable, testable, measurable
- Useful, thrifty, practical
- Compare human behavior to mechanical and biological processes
- Everyday life is predictable,explicit

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Possibilities and Conclusions

- What do the paradigms reveal about the recent theories being developed and put into practice in organizations.
- What is the Definition of Knowledge in the Four Paradigms
- What is the Meaning of Knowledge Management in the Four Paradigms

